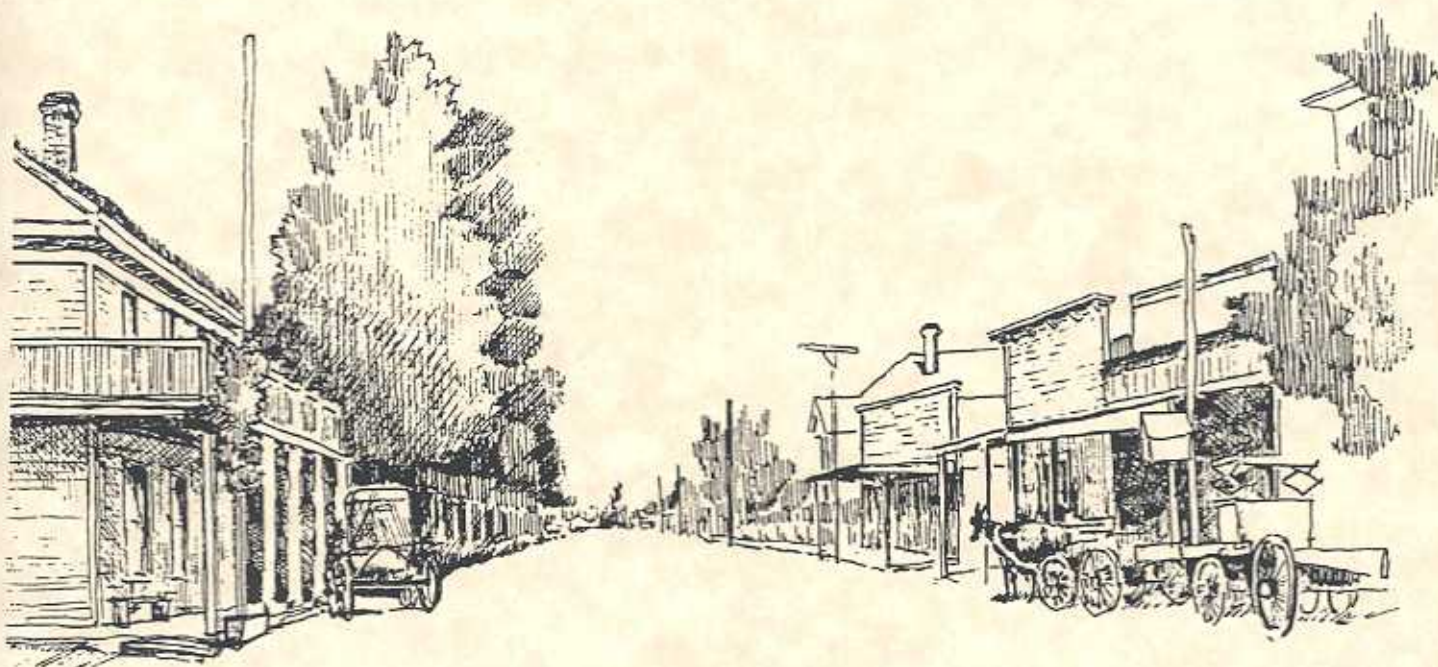


# HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY



*Looking north on Main Street  
1890's*

**Milpitas, California**  
**1990**

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY

MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA

1990

Prepared for: City of Milpitas  
455 East Calaveras Boulevard  
Milpitas, California 95035

Prepared by: Judith Marvin-Cunningham  
with Paula Juelke Carr  
Foothill Resource Associates  
Post Office Box 2040  
Murphys, California 95247

November 1990

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY

MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA

1990

Prepared for: City of Milpitas  
455 East Calaveras Boulevard  
Milpitas, California 95035

Prepared by: Judith Marvin-Cunningham  
with Paula Juelke Carr  
Foothill Resource Associates  
Post Office Box 2040  
Murphys, California 95247

November 1990

#### IV. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MILPITAS

##### Introduction

Since its incorporation in 1954, Milpitas had narrowed considerably the economic gap that once separated it from its more populous neighbors to the north and south. Today, on the eve of the twenty-first century, Milpitas is a prosperous and rapidly maturing city -- much like other cities caught up in the phenomenal growth of the Santa Clara Valley -- in which new housing subdivisions, shopping centers, fast-food franchises, and industrial parks are signs of the times.

As communities across California become increasingly homogeneous, regional and local distinguishing characteristics are rapidly waning. The once marked differences between seaport towns, inland farming communities, and financial centers are beginning to blur. Now, more than ever, it is important to reflect on our earlier years, to understand our own community roots, and to preserve for ourselves and future generations a sense of time and place, and a distinctive -- if vanishing -- way of life.

The following brief historical overview focuses on those elements that helped shape a unique identity for Milpitas -- an identity that survives in remnant portions of Native American shellmounds and Spanish adobes, in the original downtown business and residential district, and in ranch houses along the riverbanks and foothills. Like other local histories, the history of Milpitas is a mixture of the heroic and the mundane, of the tragic and the trivial; in over 3,000 years of human habitation we could expect to find no less.

This overview has been organized around three themes: "Milpitas: Crossroads Community" looks at the role that geographic location has played in the development of Milpitas, from the days of footpaths and horse trails, to wagon roads, to railroads, highways, and freeways.

"Milpitas: Agricultural Center" examines the many cultures that have influenced local settlement patterns, lifestyles, and architecture. "Milpitas: Ethnic Diversity" examines the role of several of the significant ethnic groups who settled the area. The final portion of this report on Milpitas focuses on that architectural heritage and provides a detailed assessment of numerous structures still standing in Milpitas, as well as several historic sites.

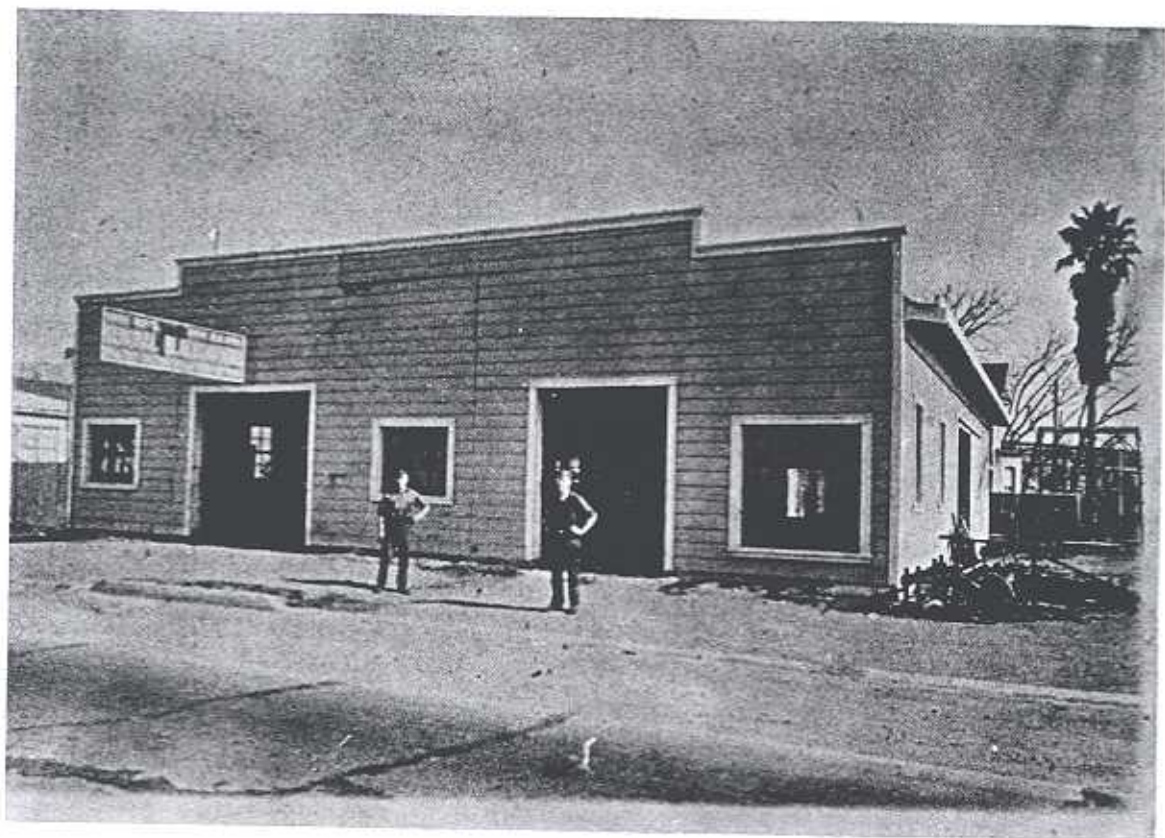


Figure 17. Winsor Blacksmith Shop  
Patricia Loomis

MILPITAS HISTORIC SITE SURVEY FORMS

Ser. No. 2

HABS HAER Loc SHL No. NR Status: 3

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common Name: Senior Center
2. Historic Name: Milpitas Grammar School
3. Street or rural address: 160 North Main Street  
City: Milpitas Zip Code: 95035 County: Santa Clara
4. Parcel Number: 28-24-19 5. Present Owner: City of Milpitas  
Address: 455 E. Calaveras Blvd. City: Milpitas  
Zip Code: 95035
6. Present Use: Senior Center  
Original Use: Grammar School

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural Style: Neoclassical

- 7b. Briefly describe the present PHYSICAL CONDITION of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original conditions:

The original Milpitas Grammar School is a superb example of the Neoclassical style. The central front facade has a pedimented portico supported by Ionic columns. The raking cornice has dentils, as does the cornicing above the columns and over the central front doors. The building is square in shape, with a central open courtyard surrounded by classrooms. Wide concrete steps lead to the central panelled entry doors topped with a pediment. The doors are flanked by two multi-paned windows topped with cornices, and two single-pane sash windows on either side. The central portion of the building is flanked by symmetrical bays, each with three multi-pane windows and lentils supported by brackets. The building is constructed of wood, with stucco siding. Except for some interior changes, the school is in original condition.

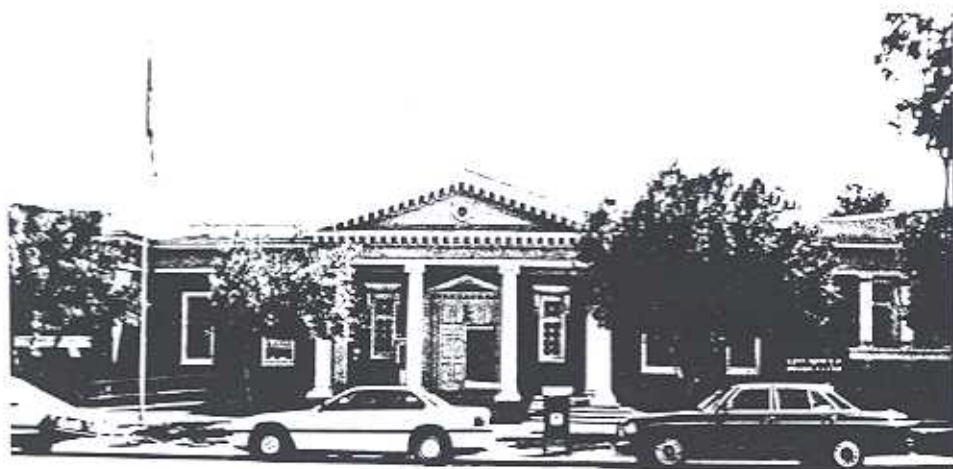
8. Construction date:  
Factual: 1916
9. Architect:
10. Builder:
11. Approx. property size  
(in feet):  
Frontage: 360' Depth: 180
12. Date of enclosed  
photograph(s): 8/23/90
13. Condition:  
Excellent(x) Good( ) Fair( ) Deteriorated( )
14. Alterations: Interior only
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)  
Open land( ) Scattered buildings( ) Densely  
built-up( ) Residential(x) Industrial( )  
Commercial(x) Other:
16. Threats to site: None known(x) Private Development()  
Zoning( ) Vandalism( ) Public Works Project( )  
Other:
17. Is the structure: On its original site? (x)  
Moved?( ) Unknown?( )
18. Related features:

#### SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural  
importance (include dates, events, and persons  
associated with the site):

The Milpitas Grammar School was completed in June 1916, to replace the first one, built in 1856 and burned in 1912. It served as City Hall between 1956 and 1969, then as a Community Center, and now as a Senior Center. As the only Neoclassical public building in Milpitas, and as an outstanding example of that architectural style, the Grammar School is architecturally significant.

20. Main theme of the historic resource:  
Architecture (1) Social/Education(2)
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys,  
personal interviews and their dates.)  
Loomis 1975
22. Date form prepared: November 1990  
By: Judith Cunningham  
Organization: Foothill Resource Associates  
Address: Box 2040 City: Murphys Zip Code: 95247  
Phone: 209-728-1408



MILPITAS HISTORIC SITE SURVEY FORMS

Ser. No. 3

HABS HAER Loc x SHL No. NR Status: 3

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common Name: DeVries Home
2. Historic Name: Dr. Renselaer J. Smith  
residence/office
3. Street or rural address: 163 North Main Street  
City: Milpitas Zip Code: 95035 County: Santa Clara
4. Parcel Number: 22-08-31
5. Present Owner: Frances K.  
and Josephine M. Devries  
Address: 163 N. Main St. City: Milpitas  
Zip Code: 95035
6. Present Use: Residence  
Original Use: Residence/office

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural Style: Prairie
- 7b. Briefly describe the present PHYSICAL CONDITION of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original conditions:  
A high-style example of the Prairie style of architecture, the Dr. Smith house has a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves. The one-story front porch is supported by massive square posts, as the small porch on the north side. The upper story has tall casement windows with small panes in a geometric pattern. The windows on the lower story have large central panes surrounded by small panes. The central front entry door, reached via concrete steps and porch, is multi-paned and has multi-paned sidelights. The well-groomed grounds have lawns with cedar, willow and palm trees, as well as shrubbery.

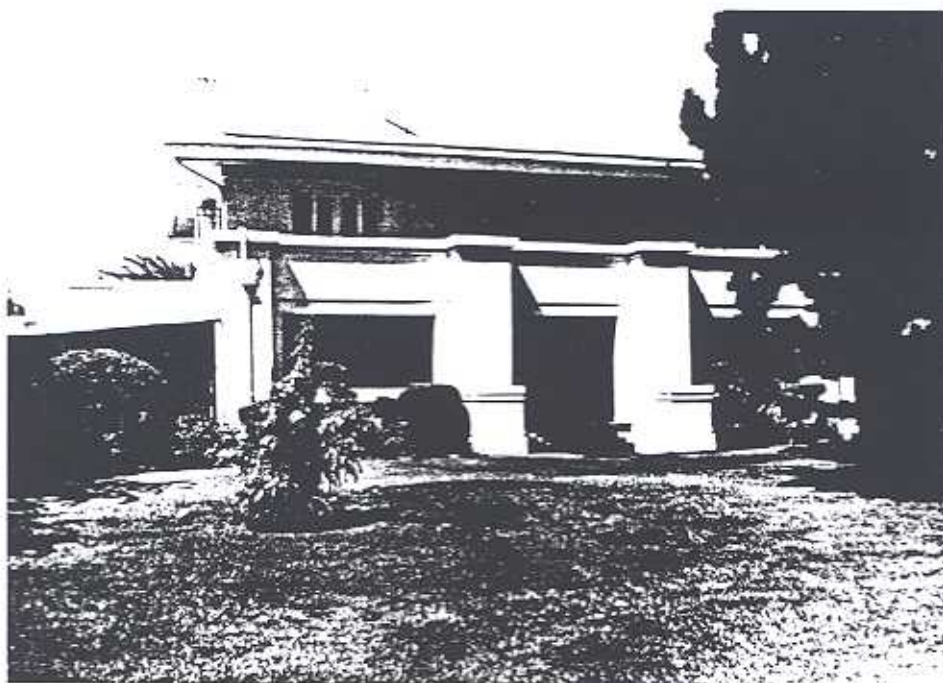
8. Construction date:  
Factual: 1915
9. Architect:
10. Builder:
11. Approx. property size  
(in feet):  
Frontage: 361 Depth: 274
12. Date of enclosed  
photograph(s): 8/23/90
13. Condition:  
Excellent(x) Good( ) Fair( ) Deteriorated( )
14. Alterations: None noted
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)  
Open land( ) Scattered buildings( ) Densely  
built-up( ) Residential(x) Industrial(x)  
Commercial( ) Other:
16. Threats to site: None known(x) Private Development()  
Zoning( ) Vandalism( ) Public Works Project( )  
Other:
17. Is the structure: On its original site? (x)  
Moved?( ) Unknown?( )
18. Related features: Garage

#### SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural  
importance (include dates, events, and persons  
associated with the site):

Built for Dr. Renselaer J. Smith, the second doctor to  
set up practice in Milpitas. Smith came to the town from  
Redlands in 1904, succeeding Dr. William Wilson. As a fine  
example of high-style Prairie architecture, The Dr. Smith  
house is unique in Milpitas. It embodies the best elements  
of the style that originated in Chicago and was popular for  
a brief period between 1905 and 1915.

20. Main theme of the historic resource:  
Architecture (x)
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys,  
personal interviews and their dates.)  
Loomis 1986
22. Date form prepared: November 1990  
By: Judith Cunningham  
Organization: Foothill Resource Associates  
Address: Box 2040      City: Murphys      Zip Code: 95247  
Phone: 209-728-1408



MILPITAS HISTORIC SITE SURVEY FORMS

Ser. No. 4

HABS HAER Loc x SHL No.

NR Status: 4c

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common Name: Winsor Blacksmith Shop

2. Historic Name: Winsor Blacksmith Shop

3. Street or rural address: 112 North Main St.

City: Milpitas Zip Code: 95035 County: Santa Clara

4. Parcel Number: 28-24-26 5. Present Owner: Dorothy A. Winsor, Ruth A. Winsor, et.al.  
Address: 1261 N. San Pedro City: San Jose  
Zip Code: 95110

6. Present Use: City Corporation Yard  
Original Use: Blacksmith Shop

DESCRIPTION

7a. Architectural Style: False-front Commercial

7b. Briefly describe the present PHYSICAL CONDITION of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original conditions:

The Winsor Blacksmith Shop has a low-pitched front gable roof with exposed rafters and a simple pedimented false front. There is California Rustic siding on the front facade, with vertical tongue and groove on the sides and rear walls. A one-and-one-half story tankhouse is attached to the southeast corner of the rear of the building. The front facade is composed of two large, vertical-board sliding doors with three multi-paned industrial windows between and on either side. The south side of the building has a large sliding door and multi-pane windows.

8. Construction date:  
Estimated: 1920
9. Architect: Unknown
10. Builder: Unknown
11. Approx. property size  
(in feet):  
Frontage: 121 Depth: 90  
approx. acreage:
12. Date of enclosed  
photograph(s): 8/23/90
13. Condition:  
Excellent(x) Good( ) Fair( ) Deteriorated( )
14. Alterations: None noted
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)  
Open land( ) Scattered buildings( ) Densely  
built-up( ) Residential(x) Industrial(x)  
Commercial( ) Other:
16. Threats to site: None known(x) Private Development()  
Zoning( ) Vandalism( ) Public Works Project( )  
Other:
17. Is the structure: On its original site? (x)  
Moved?( ) Unknown?( )
18. Related features:

#### SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural  
importance (include dates, events, and persons  
associated with the site):

The Winsor Blacksmith Shop was built by Tom and George Winsor, descendants of pioneer Milpitas settlers John and Catherine Winsor, in the 1920s. They provided blacksmithing services for the village and the travelers on the Oakland Road. The building was listed on the 1930 Sanborn map as "Blacksmith and Wood Works", so presumably they were also engaged in woodworking.

20. Main theme of the historic resource:  
Economic/Industrial (1) Architecture (2)
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys,  
personal interviews and their dates.)  
Loomis 1986
22. Date form prepared: November 1990  
By: Judith Cunningham  
Organization: Foothill Resource Associates  
Address: Box 2040 City:Murphys Zip Code:95247  
Phone:209-728-1408

